

Interviewed by Kathleen Irving, 24 October 2003

Transcribed by Kathleen Irving, December 2004

This interview took at place at the Nash home, 1875 South 2000 East, Naples, Utah.

Kathleen Irving (KI): Ray, let's start by having you tell me who your parents are and when you were born.

Ray: My parents were George A. Nash and Elizabeth Rasmussen. My mother's name was Elizabeth Fredricka. Her father was from Denmark and her mother was from Sweden. My father's parents both came from Norway. They emigrated here in the 1800s.

KI: Here to the United States or here to the Uinta Basin?

Ray: My grandfather Michael O. Nash was living in Norway and studying to be, they kind of designated him to be a minister in the Lutheran Church. But I guess he was scheduled to go in the military, the draft or something, so instead of doing that he hurriedly got passage to the United States and went to Minnesota, where his older brother lived.

While up in Minnesota, he worked there for a year or so, his brother died and he married his brother's wife after about a year. They had a child. In the interim, LDS missionaries had contacted him and they were influenced. His then-wife suggested that they check it out. But she, I guess, realized that her life was terminal or something right then anyway. Both she and her son who was born died. She made him promise, and, of course, this is all hearsay, she exacted a promise from him that he would check it out.

He came to Salt Lake in the 1870s, I think around 1872, somewhere around that time, just when I don't know. Anyway, he came there and worked on the farm. He worked on Brigham Young's farm for a while. I think he was farming what is now Liberty Park. He became very interested and he joined the [LDS] church. He met my grandmother, who was an Olsen. She was a full sister of Jacob W. Olsen and that is Charles Olsen's father. He was the youngest in the family.

Christian Olsen, my great-grandfather, was quite a character, I guess. He and his wife lived just out of Oslo in Norway, what is Oslo now, they called it Christiania then; really the name Oslo is the original name. When the Danes conquered, or took over, Norway in, I think, oh, about the time when the Hanseatic League was around there somewhere, the Danish people came over. They conquered them, they just about conquered England. If you look back in history, the Danes were a very strong nation. The Hanseatic League was a group of commercial people that dealt in commerce by sea, in other words in fabrics and all kinds of things. I guess their strongest places were probably Hamburg and northern Germany. Then Copenhagen. Copenhagen is on an island. They had some ports in Norway, particularly Bergen. I think it was 1997 when my wife and I went to Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

But going back to the original story, my great-grandfather Olsen was very stern and things like that. He went to work in some kind of a factory. When he got back, he'd gone to the grog house and spent all of his money and he didn't have any to bring home. His wife was feeding them on a pittance, crumbs, practically nothing. She was very, very upset that he had

done such a thing. When he realized that he had spent his wages on drink, he repented and vowed he'd never touch it again and he never did.

Anyway, eventually they joined the [LDS] Church and the oldest daughter, Antoinette, she emigrated to Utah before any of the other Olsens. She met a Dutchman by the name of Christian Frederick Bernard Lybbert and married him. She was his second wife. His first wife had no children. She was a mid-wife. They homesteaded this land that I'm on now. I own the original Lybbert homestead. They came from the Wasatch Front out here, I think in about the 1880s.

Anyway, families being what they were, they came here. My dad purchased this property, this whole place here. He and his brother purchased it from the Lybberts in 1910. The Lybberts, most of them, went to Canada. They, oh, I guess you might say they were frontiersmen. There was a big family of men. There were six boys and I think about three girls in the family. Their descendants are scattered around here.

The Merrells, one of them, Mary, very lovely individual, very wonderful person, Mary Merrell was, she was a Mary Lybbert. She married Will Merrell. Acel Manwaring's wife was one of their daughters. There was Porter Merrell over in Duchesne and some of the others around here, they were tied in with the Lybberts.

My granddad Nash married my grandmother in the Salt Lake area, they met there. They gravitated down to Utah County and settled in Salem, Utah. That's where they established their home. The first son, Michael Nash, my uncle Michael, was born premature. The story is that he was small enough that they could put him in a quart cup. But he survived and lived to be a grown man. The other brother, Joseph, was the next one in the family and then my dad was born, George. After George was born Josie, Josephine. (My grandmother Nash's name was Josephine Olsen. She married Michael Olsen Nash and that was my granddad. They lived basically in Salem.)

Granddad had, I think it was eight in the family. There was Mike and Joe and George and Oliver and Bernard and Edwin, and the two girls, Josephine and Annie. Annie died when she was a year and a half old. Josephine, my aunt, she was a marvelous lady. She lived to just right at ninety. They lived here. She married a fellow by the name of Bascom and they were here in the valley.

There were a lot of them, quite a lot of relationship, various people. Of course, there wasn't opportunities to marry. I don't think there was any marrying cousins, there may have been, but it was farther away than that.

KI: Do you agree that it seems like people came out here from the Wasatch Front, mostly after land, then they seem to have attracted a lot of friends and family members?

Ray: Yes. Of course, Ashley Valley, originally, I think the people thought that Ashley Valley was part of the Indian reservation that was set apart by President Lincoln, and whites were forbidden to go onto the Indian reservation. They could travel through, but they almost did so at their own peril. Captain Dodds was an agent for the Indians over there, I think he was around Whiterocks most of the time. There was the Uncompaghre and the White River and the Whiterocks River, three bands of the Ute tribe.

But Dodds found out that this wasn't part of the reservation. So he came here in 1873 and established his home up in what is now the Ashley area, they called it Ashley at the time. It was

about 1500 West and close to that north up there. That was where Captain Dodds was; he had a son, Joe, whose descendants on the property right now.

Joe Dodds was one of the originals. Joe was born shortly after they were here and Joe died just a few years ago. I knew Joe very well. He had two daughters and they're both alive. There's Virginia and [Lois]. They both married fellows by the name of Hall. Marion Hall died. Virginia is about my age. She married Morgan Hall, as I recall. I think Morgan is dead now, too.

The only one that had children was Marion. I think it was two brothers married two sisters, is what it was. Marion died here a number of years ago. His daughter, I think Carol is her name, but they still have the original homestead up there.

KI: How did you end up with your dad's property?

Ray: Well, my dad came here in the early 1900s, he and my uncle Mike, and they bought the Lybbert property from the Lybberts. So essentially, I'm the third tenant from the homesteader. When my dad died, Mother had it and one thing and another, but the Lybberts owned it, then my dad got it, then I got it.

KI: How much property is it today?

Ray: Well, there were 160 acres to start with. I own sixty acres here and where Evan [Baker] is, he's got about a quarter of an acre that's out of it. Then these three homes here are part of it. It went from the bottom of that creek over there to over here at the half-mile line.

KI: What did your dad do with the property? Did he farm?

Ray: Oh, yes, they farmed. It was a farm.

KI: What did they grow?

Ray: Oh, they grew alfalfa and wheat and corn and barley and oats and other crops. They always had a potato patch, not very big, but they always raised a hundred or two bushel of potatoes every year.

KI: For their own use or to sell?

Ray: They put them down in the pit. About this time of year when you got ready to dig each fall, why, you had to go down and throw all the old ones out so you could put the new ones back down in.

KI: It sounds like you used to do that.

Ray: Oh, yes. My mother's mother lived just right up the street here where Glen Reynolds lives, just on the same street, so essentially, I've spent most of my life here. Oh, there was five years that we lived, when we were kids, out in Utah County. Then there was basically ten years when I was in the military and away from here, going to the university and getting my law degree and

things like that.

KI: Tell me about your school years.

Ray: Well, I started the first grade and went up to the old Naples School up here.

KI: Was that when there was just one building?

Ray: No, there were two buildings then. They had eight grades and my first grade teacher was Mary Winder. She was an older sister of the Winder family that lived right up here by the airport. Of course, every first grader loved his first grade teacher, no matter what, and she was a marvelous person. She was very kind and thoughtful.

I also went to second grade here, then we moved out to Utah County and lived in Salem. I was there for third, fourth, fifth and sixth. I had an abscessed lung that had to be operated on, so I didn't go to the last half of the third year that I was in school. So they had me re-do the third grade. Then when we came here, I skipped the seventh and went right into the eighth grade.

My brother Roy and I were twins. They used to call this Twin Street. He and I were here on our farm. Our house was just over here by Evan's. The house was just a little south of there and that's where we lived. Just across the street was Elmer Manwaring. He lived there. He had twin girls, Hope and June. Over across here, where Carl Oldaker lives, there were twins there, Clifton and Clifta Haws. Three sets of twins right here within the proximity of little over half a mile.

KI: That is very unusual.

Ray: Yes.

KI: Were you about the same age?

Ray: Well, Hope and June are two years younger than I. Clifton and Clifta, they were about the same age.

KI: So you came back and went to eighth grade here, still at Naples?

Ray: Oh, yeah, the old Naples school, I went to eighth grade. Then I went to high school here and graduated from high school.

KI: At that time was the high school up where the swimming pool is now? [170 South 600 West]

Ray: Yes. That was the place. There were, I think, about sixty in our graduation class.

KI: I don't think you've said yet when you were born.

Ray: I was born on the 17th of October 1915.

KI: So you graduated in about 1933?

Ray: Yes, I graduated in the spring of '33. I was seventeen when I graduated.

KI: That would have been right in the depth of the Depression.

Ray: Oh, I'll say it was, my gracious. We were never hungry, but you never saw funds at all. There was no work for wages. There was always work to be done. Ashley Valley was essentially a farming community at the time. I think about all we raised around here in this valley of any consequence were hay and some grain. Corn grew well, but it was such a problem to harvest it. You had to harvest it all by hand. Hay, we would use what we called slips and slings. It was essentially a wooden platform on poles, runners that you could pull through the fields and put the hay on, then it had nets.

KI: How did you pull it through the fields, did you use animals?

Ray: A team of horses. We'd take it out and then after we did that, we'd put the hay on loose, there were a couple of mowing machines, all of it was horse power at that time. The only powered machine that you saw, essentially, was a thrashing machine. There were very few tractors and all of them were steel-wheeled. The roads were good to travel until about the last of February, well, about the middle of March, and then they would start to break up when the frost left. You didn't get anywhere on the roads then because they'd freeze down, then the frost would break up, and mud and that would ooze out, things like that. So you were basically locked in from the first of April until June, when everything dried out.

The county had graders that they'd have people go along and grade the roads. I've seen those old graders stuck in the mud, too. They'd use four teams on them to pull, is what they would do. That would be eight head of horses to pull them out, but they would be pulled by two teams when they were ready to be pulled. A person sat up in front and one back behind, he operated the blade and turned it so that it would smooth it. These roads, even along here, would get bogged down.

KI: How did you get to school?

Ray: Well, I rode a horse when I was in first grade. In second grade, I rode up through the fields here on a horse, we had one. Two of us would get on, Roy and I would ride the horse up. Then when we came back, when I was in the eighth grade, of course, it was not difficult, it was just a half mile and we'd walk. Then when I went to high school, I either rode a horse or rode a bicycle.

KI: I imagine it would be hard to ride a bicycle in all that mud, too.

Ray: Well, yes. When you'd get there, you were pretty dirty. About that time, after the Depression came and there was a drought, we saw [we] could grow more food per acre, and you could husband your water better, by putting it on a row of corn. So, you'd plant a patch of corn, we had about four or five acres, patches of corn, sometimes more, and when we got the water,

why, maybe it would only go down one or two rows. We'd hand cultivate it. We had a cultivator that you'd walk behind. You had a horse in front and one rode the horse, pulling through the rows and the other held the cultivator back behind and furrowed out.

Then we'd cut that corn with either a sharp hoe or a sickle and just lay it down in bunches, then we'd haul it in. We saw the advantage of having silos, pit silos. Just dig a trench in the ground, then you'd lay that corn in. Oh, I'll tell you! They covered it with dirt, then when winter came, you'd have to almost blast it off so you could get to it and get it out to haul it out to the stock.

Then we got machinery. They got some choppers that were run by tractors and they would chop the corn and put it in in a chopped condition, and that was just marvelous. Then, and this was about the time, we never got out of the Depression until the war started. Essentially, from the early '30s, about '31 or '32 until '39, it was terrible conditions. Nobody had money. My golly, a quarter was as big as a hundred dollar bill today, it seemed like.

KI: You know, I was talking to Ralph Ashton a while ago and I asked him how Rae stayed in business during that time. [Rae Ashton owned and operated Ashton Brothers Department Store.] He said it was mostly just barter. But it seems to me that if so many people out here were growing the same things, how could they all take it to Ashton Brothers and get things they needed? Who were they bartering with?

Ray: Well, some of the businesses, many of the businesses, went broke. The Ashley Co-op which owns that building where Gales is [4 West Main], the company still owns the building, they were the big store here for years and years. They had granaries out back and you used to take your stuff in and they'd trade grain for certain items. Generally, wheat was a cent a pound; that had to be cleaned wheat. We took wheat to the Vernal Mill, on North Vernal Avenue, where that power plant was for a while, where that substation is [approximately 455 North Vernal Avenue].

The first threshing machines that I remember were steam, great big steam, great big, huge things. Oh, the back wheels, I think, must have been maybe as high as eight feet. Great big, humongous things. The front wheels, they'd steer a little with those and get around. They had belts on the steam thresher machine. Herman Miller, he was a Vernal City policeman for years and years later, but Herman Miller had one.

I remember they'd carry a big plank so they could go across people's bridges where the ditches were. The bridges would hold a team and wagon and stuff, but it wouldn't hold that steam engine. They'd lay those big planks across on top of there. There was a fellow that run the engine, the steam engine, and then there was a person that hauled the coal and wood. They'd go over to the mines over here, either up above Maeser or over to Brush Creek. Sometimes they went up to the Sweatfield and these mines up north, up the Mail Draw up there, and they'd come back with a load of coal about every day. This coal was used to fire the furnace.

They'd have this great big old steamer. The man that had the coal and that, he'd come very early in the morning, just as early as he could, and he would start the fire in the steam engine. He got the water. Where he got his water from I'm not sure. I think he went up to the canal and got water because they wanted it as clean as they could—good clean water. That was put in and he'd get the furnace going. Then they had great big tubes going through. That's where the heat went through. It would boil, and that would cause the steam to go.

Once they had the engine going, then it would operate the pistons. The steam would push

it forward and it would trip the valve over, then the steam would hit the other end and push it back, reciprocate. They'd finally get that going and they'd have to have, I think, oh, forty, fifty pounds of pressure. There was a gauge there. Herman Miller would get on there and all of a sudden, when everything was ready, he'd pull the whistle and that whistle was just like a train. I think they had to be careful because if too much steam went through the whistle, why it wouldn't drive the machine.

But they would start that belt. The belt was very long and they had a cap made out of what looked like heavy screen wire that set over the smokestack. The reason that was there is they didn't want sparks to get out and catch the grain on fire. They'd go and start the threshing machine and then it would be backed up to a grain stack.

Grain was cut by binders, grain binders. There is a distinction between machines that cut hay and grain. Hay mowers have the cutting knife on the right side of the machine. Grain binder knives are on the left side of the binder. Grain binders cut the ripened grain and it falls on canvasses that elevate it up and over onto a mechanism that gathers enough of the cut grain to make a bundle. Then it trips a knotter that ties the bundle with sisal twine. When the bundle is tied, it is dropped onto a holder called a cradle that holds several bundles. The operator of the binder then trips the cradle of grain on the ground. The binder is pulled by strong horses, usually three or four. The power that drives the binder is a large bull wheel that turns when the machine is pulled across the ground.

KI: Those bundles were already made before the thrasher got there, weren't they?

Ray: Oh, yes, they were made. You cut the grain when it was not ripe enough to thresh, but you tied the grain in bundles. Then this cradle would hold, oh, six or eight bundles of grain, depending on what kind of grain you had, if it was barley, oh, that was terrible stuff. Those barley beards would scratch you all over. Wheat wasn't bad. Oats was lovely to handle 'cause it was smooth. But you'd take that, then you'd put it in shocks, we called them. Stand them so the tops of the grain were up in the air. Out in the field you shocked it and once you had it shocked, then in a day or two you could go out with wagons, or racks we called them, and we'd put that grain on. You always put the heads with the grain pointed in. Then we'd haul it in and stack it. That was all done by hand.

We'd take these bundles of grain, make a big stack, depending on how much we had. Somebody would toss those bundles to one who would stack it. Then your stack was round. You'd generally put, oh, depending on how many stacks you had to have, you'd build those up about as high as you could. I guess fifteen feet was about as high as a person could throw. The barley was hard to stack; it would slip. The bundles of barley had a tendency to slide, they don't hold. Wheat and oats, those would hold.

But you'd take that, then when the thrasher came, you'd put it in stacks because you couldn't get the thrasher, and of course, all the weeds that were there, in the grain, had dried so that they would blow away. Essentially, a thrasher has what they call concaves and cylinders that take and smash that, just bang the daylights out of it. Then the grain goes through the sifting process, and the straws and chaff that are light are up on top, the grain is down below and it's, again, kind of shattered a little bit.

Then they have fans in there. These belts that were on the separator would operate this fan. Then the heavy grain, of course, was heavier, and it would fall down. They had a big fan at

the end of the machine that would blow that straw out into a stack. Then the grain came up through a little elevator situation to a thing that had a weight on it that measured it. It measured half a bushel at a time. They set the wheat at about sixty pounds a bushel; barley would be about fifty, fifty-four, I think. Oats was thirty-two pounds to the bushel. Then at every half-bushel, the thrasher would drop and it would count. They had a counter up there that would count it.

The thrasher would come and they would take what they called "toll." That's how they got paid. Their toll was one-tenth. You'd have hired hands that would come and work on the straw stack and you needed people to work on the grain stack. They would get a half-bushel of grain per every hundred bushel you thrashed. So you get two or three people on the grain stack, so the thrasher took one-tenth of it, then you had people that came and helped you and they got so much.

KI: Did you also have to feed those people?

Ray: Oh, yeah, you always did. Thrashers always ate three meals a day at the place they worked. And they were humongous meals. I worked on a thrasher one summer as a bagger. I operated the bags that bagged the grain. The grain, that was your pay. That's what you got.

Then you'd take the grain up after you got it. As soon as it was thrashed, we'd take to the mill what we called the grist. We'd take some sacks of wheat up, generally we had clean [sacks] that were new or cleaned and washed and we'd take grain up in a team and wagon up to the Vernal Mill. We'd dump it there and they would weigh it. They'd run it through a screen, cleaned it. Occasionally you'd come back with cleanings. Then they'd weigh the clean wheat. Then for every sixty pounds of wheat, and I think, I'm quite sure on this, for sixty pounds of wheat, which was a bushel, you'd get thirty pounds of flour, fifteen pounds of bran. They had a roller mill that would roll the wheat instead of grinding it, like stone-ground, it would roll it, and the hulls, or the bran, is the outside of the kernels. You'd get fifteen pounds of that bran and a five-pound bag of germade that you used to make mush with. It looks like Cream of Wheat, except it was a little brown. And oh, it was delicious stuff!

KI: I remember Milt Searle telling me he'd go up there and get handfuls of bran. He said it was the most wonderful stuff to eat.

Ray: Oh, it was. Kids would go up to the mill and they would never go and grab a handful of flour and eat it. Nobody ever ate flour! But they always went over to the bran and they'd come down. You'd take a handful of that and eat it, it was good!

KI: That's what I've been told. Milt told me that there's not really anything like it anymore.

Ray: Well, the roller mills were better mills than the grinding one because when they had stone ground, it ground everything and pulverized it. But a roller mill takes the grain and crushes it so that it's dry and the flour can come out. But the hull, or the bran, which is the outside of it, stays in place. But we'd get that. As soon as you got thrashed, you'd go right up to go get your first grist.

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KI: Tell me about your wife. It was Flag Day when you got engaged?

Ray: She remembers, but she has Alzheimers at the present time and it's difficult. But anyway, we got engaged, I think, about six weeks after we met. Then we got married on the 4 September 1946. [He married Marial L. Wixom.]

KI: I think it's so interesting, when I talk to war veterans, how quickly some of them got married. They say, "We went out on a date and by that weekend we were engaged." It's interesting.

Ray: Yeah.

KI: And never divorced. Nobody ever gets divorced.

Ray: We've been together for fifty-seven years, going on fifty-eight.

KI: It's a great thing.

Ray: It's rather interesting. When I was up to law school, maybe you've heard this fellow in the service that flew, *The Utah Man*. He came down and he was in law school, too. Walter Travis Stewart. We'd go down to the LDS Institute [of Religion] after law school and take a class. We liked it. So while we were there, we couldn't get a class in at a particular time, so they had one: "Marriage and Family and Courtship and Marriage." We were the only two married guys there!

Lowell Bennion, and I don't know whether you've heard about Lowell Bennion, but everybody called him Brother B. anyway. Lowell Bennion was a good guy. He says, "Now, young people should have a broad acquaintance with everybody and then there should be a kind of a winnowing out. You find one or two that you like and you go back and forth and you have a good, long, solid relationship. You have certain likes and dislikes that you share together. This goes on for a while until you choose one. Then you and she, or she and he, whichever the case may be, they go together, and then they decide that they're meant for each other and they become engaged and then they announce their engagement. They start planning how they'll do this and how they'll live and one thing and another."

"Brother Walt," he says, "How long after you got back, after you met your wife, was it before you got married?" Walt hemmed and hawed. "Well," he says, "two months before we got engaged." "You're not much help. Ray, you're married, how long after you met your wife did you get engaged?" I said, "Well, it wasn't too long." "How long?" I said, "Six weeks." "Oh, you guys," he said, "you don't help me at all!"

But his advice was very pertinent and good. Most of the people in the class were much younger than we and they were fine people. But we weren't doing much to help him out at all!

But Walt flew a bomber from Bengasi, Libya, across the Mediterranean to bomb the Polesti Oil Field. I don't think over half of them came back. They did a lot of damage. Walt had flown and bombed in Europe and things like that. He lives now in Benjamin, Utah.

KI: You and Marial had five boys, is that right?

Ray: Five boys, no girls. Their names are Mark Wixom, Lee Randy, Ray LaMar, Dale Kay, and Clyde Dee Nash.

KI: Did you have any of these boys outside of Vernal? Like when you were in law school?

Ray: Yes, Mark was born while I was in law school. Then I came back here and established practice in '49. I practiced here from '49 until '97.

KI: Did you go into practice with someone when you first came back, or just on your own?

Ray: No, I established, cold turkey, my own office. I was up in the Coltharp Building for a while. Then when Mark got his degree and became a lawyer, why then, he and I practiced together for a while. But most of my practice was civil. I did a lot of water agencies and water work and stuff like that. In fact, I was the attorney that organized almost every water improvement district in the basin, with the exception of one. I did Jensen and Maeser and Ashley Valley, Ouray Park, Tridell/Lapoint, Fruitland and Johnson Water Districts. The Ashley Valley District covers everything in the valley except Maeser, Jensen and Vernal.

I was involved in litigation about water rights and a few things like that. I worked with irrigation companies from all across the area here. The only reason that perhaps I excelled in water law, and when I was in school, was because some of my compatriots didn't realize that water runs downstream always. You can't take water that may be available down here and move it up there. Unless you pump it or something, you've got to use it someplace else. So that's the situation.

When I started practice here in Vernal it was Hugh Colton, Clyde Johnson (old Bus Johnson) and Whit Hammond. Then, of course, there was Mrs. Cooper that did some work. But that was the extent of the legal firms here in Vernal about the first ten years. Then [John] Beaslin came in and some of the others. We have a good core here.

KI: You did a stint as the Uintah County Attorney, didn't you?

Ray: Oh, yes, I served two terms. Whit Hammond and I traded back and forth. He won it once; I ran against him and won the next time; he ran against me and won the next time; I ran against him and defeated him. Then the next time he come up and he says, and old Whit was a prince of a guy, I just thought the world of him, we fought each other tooth and nail time and time again, but Whit was a prince of a man, he was a good guy. He says, "Ray, let's go down and file." I said, "No, Whit, I'm not going to." "Oh, come on," he says, "let's file." He says, "It's your turn again." Anyway, for twenty years it was either Whit or I, almost.

KI: Do you know what those years were?

Ray: Let's see Whit was elected in '50. I was elected in '58 to '62. Then I went back in '66 to '70, as I recall. I'm just thinking. Then it became, well, actually, it was a full-time job. We couldn't do private practice with it.

KI: Like it is now.

Ray: I think JoAnn Stringham is the county attorney [now] and she has a full-time assistant. I officed with JoAnn for, I think, about two years. She was up in the same building where I was. I know we had a case that we came together, and I said, "JoAnn, we can work on this like anything, but nobody's going to get anywhere." Her client was adamant and my client was adamant, so I said, "This is one we've got to try, and the court will wind up telling them this is this and that's that."

And that's just what happened. We tried to convince them, but we couldn't, so we tried the case and the court did just exactly what I said it would, but everybody was happy once the court said so.

When you try cases, you can see situations that you know just what's going to happen, but you can't always convince your client. You can tell them, but it doesn't matter.

KI: I also read that you were a federal magistrate for a while.

Ray: Eighteen years.

KI: What did you do in that position?

Ray: Well, the federal government has their own law enforcement agencies. The Forest Service, the Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management, they have enforcement units to handle things. Then the Court of Federal Regulations, which Congress has authorized.

Well, a person goes up here and he cuts him a load of poles that he has no right to at all. He doesn't have a logging permit or anything. They give him a citation. They are brought before me as a part-time magistrate. They were, I was a part-time magistrate for eighteen years and I handled those violations out here on the Dinosaur National Monument, things like that that they brought before me. People would go in there and try to chip out some fossils and things like that. Some of those people are touchy as all get out; they pick up a piece of sand and they think it might be a fossil.

You have to sit in judgement on those. My biggest problems were people who had mining claims on the forest. They'd go in there and do some blasting without making notification and telling the Forest Service what they were doing, posting the surrounding areas so that danger wouldn't occur.

Once in a while you'd have, like, we had a kid who got him a new jeep, it had a big fancy bumper on it. He was out here, out southwest of Duchesne. He went up to those forest signs to see what he could do. He pushed them over! He pushed about ten of them over, and they caught him red-handed. He was a young kid, so we had to do things with him. He said, "Let me pay the fine." I said, "No." I says, "If you do, your dad will wind up paying the fine. I think what we'd better do is find out what it's going to cost and we'll fine you that in cash. But," I says, "so that you'll know what it takes to plant a sign, we'll have you dig holes and re-plant them."

He wasn't happy with that. He lived in Spanish Fork. He came out and went with the Forest Service. The Forest Service came out and reported and says, "Yes, once that kid got there, he did a bang-up job. He dug good holes, he set those posts, and he was as proud as a peacock after they were done."

KI: Another thing you did, when Naples City incorporated in 1982, you took care of that and were the city attorney.

Ray: Well, yes, I was the attorney for that. The problem came, essentially, over water and water rights and things like that. Vernal, is a nice place, I love it and I love the people there. But they were cherry-stemming. Because of the fact that entities could collect a portion of the sales tax that would be available to businesses, they set up plans to incorporate into Vernal City a strip of ground two hundred feet on each side of the highway all the way to the Jensen bridge. At least they were talking about it.

Those of us here in Naples didn't want that. They'd get the sales tax. So they had a series of meetings up here at the school, four or five of them, big turnouts. So they determined to seek incorporation.

KI: Maeser was an incorporated city, too, for a while, but Naples is really the only other one here now.

Ray: Well, Maeser was incorporated many years ago as a town and they did that because they had waterworks. Maeser put small water lines down those roads, then they took a strip of land on each side of the road, about 180 feet on each side. Maeser, the center of it, was just like that. Maeser didn't have a tax base, and Vernal steps in and says, "Hey, wait a minute. You people better start grading your own roads, paying for your law enforcement, which you must do. If you are going to be a city, you'd better stand up to the block and do it."

Well, the people in Maeser, the only thing they had up there was just a little grocery store and no sales tax base. Naples, on the other hand, had 102 businesses down here along this highway.

KI: And they were oil businesses.

Ray: And they were big businesses. So the people in Maeser decided, and they took it to a vote, should they disincorporate? It was voted on in an election. I prepared the documents. They disincorporated. Then the county assumed the law enforcement and things like that. At that time the people in the city of Maeser had transferred, in trust, to the Maeser Water Improvement District, the water rights they had. Now, what Maeser City had was infinitesimal and small compared with what their needs were, so they had a water district organized and they transferred their rights there to that water district. I organized the water district for Maeser. Ashley Valley Water and Sewer Improvement District operate the big new treatment plant that's out here in the mouth of Ashley Canyon.

The Central Utah Water Conservancy District participated and helped Vernal build the new water treatment plant that they've got up there. It's up north of Maeser up there, up on the hill, you know, as you head toward Taylor Mountain. They pump water, a lot of their water comes from Brush Creek. Of course, Vernal has some amount of the flow of Ashley Creek, and this is a long, convoluted legal understanding of how these water rights are and one thing and another, but Ashley Valley was paddling their own canoe and got no assistance from anyone else. So they built their own treatment plant, which is up at the mouth of the canyon.

It takes raw water and it runs through a centrifuge and things like that, so if they treat the

water right up there as it flows and it doesn't have to settle in settling ponds, like Vernal's, and they've got big pipelines and things like that, tremendous lines, and Ashley Valley has the capacity now to treat seven and a half million gallons of water a day. If you put that in a stream, that is twenty-one second feet of water. And a second foot of water is the quantity of water that a cubic foot contains flowing past a given point every second. It's a flow. So, the Ashley Valley treatment plant is very capable at the present time of treating all the water that's there. I think all the water that Jensen gets and that Maeser gets is treated in Ashley Valley Treatment Plant.

There were a bunch of us old fogies that fought like cats and dogs; we're all died off now, we're gone, that's Hugh Colton, Bry Stringham, L.Y. Siddoway, Av Kay and those, they're gone. Rational minds are beginning to see things now. We could see it and we talked about it, but we couldn't get together on it. Maybe it's an exercise in anthropology: people can only develop cultures to a certain extent and then they're blocked and that's that.

But there is a good relationship now going between the entities. Boyd Workman is chairman, he's the manager, of Ashley Valley Water. Ken Bassett, the Vernal City manager, is an exceptional man. They've got people up in Maeser. They've organized what they call the Sewer Management Board, under law, and it operates the sewer treatment plant out here. Now they did have all these lagoons out here, but they had to do away with those, I guess, because they were going to drown the squawfish or something, I don't know.

In technicality, I guess the water coming from the treatment plant is as pure and as good as that that is treated at the treatment plant. I don't know whether I'd want to drink it, but Bob Elbert, from Salt Lake, who I knew very well, he was head of the Metropolitan Water District out there for many years. He went to New Orleans and they found that throughout the United States, the water from New Orleans, that came out of the Mississippi River, and there were twenty-three big cities above it that dumped their sewage in there, Cincinnati, Louisville, Saint Louis, Omaha, all those big cities. But the water that New Orleans was getting after all those cities was the purest water of any in the United States, and they treated it and cleaned the water.

KI: Can you tell me what might have been your biggest case or your most important case?

Ray: Oh, I don't know. The most comical case I ever had was when I was county attorney. All the people are dead now, in fact, I wrote up a resume of it, I'll have to see if I can get it for you. It was involving hearsay evidence. The Lowes lived across the street from Hilltop over there, just before you go down Halfmile Dugway, down south there.

I became acquainted with Miss Lowe, they were Swedes, they immigrated here. Mr. and Mrs. Lowe and their son, Holger, and their daughter, Valborg. Well, Miss Lowe, I guess she was born in the 1890s, somewhere around there. She was an older lady when I knew her. Anyway, Norman Fletcher was sheriff. He called me up and said, "Ray, we've got a problem. I think we have an attempted rape." He says, "I've got to come up and talk to you about it and see if we can get a complaint."

It happened that Miss Lowe, she only had about two or three teeth in her mouth and she looked like a witch no matter where she was, she always thumbed rides. Her parents and her brother had died and she was alone trying to operate that farm. She must have been in her sixties or seventies at that time. People around Roosevelt, she knew them, and she thumbed a ride.

Virgil Burns offered her a ride. Instead of stopping where she wanted to get out, why, he drove on down and went down off a dirt road, dragged her out and attempted to rape her. She

was prudish. She wouldn't testify as to what happened, wouldn't say things. I said, "Miss Lowe..." And she said, "I *don't* say those things." I said, "Miss Lowe, you must do."

I had a recess and finally, Earl Dillman was the attorney on the other side and he was just laughing to himself because he didn't think that I could get the testimony. He drug her out and he tore her bloomers off and one thing and another and put her on the ground and things like that. So she says, "You can't do that!" She says, "I know your mother. She won't like you if you do." And one thing and another, and I know it was really tough for her. But the basic evidence, I won't get into everything, I said, "What did you do?" She said, "I said, 'Oh, God tell me what to do!'" She was a devout Catholic, very devout. "Oh God, tell me what to do! Tell me what to do!" I said, "What did you do then?" She said, "God told me what to do." I says, "What did he tell you?" "I object on the grounds that's it hearsay," Earl Dillman said. He was right. I couldn't get the hearsay.

So I paused and I says, "Miss Lowe, do you think the defendant heard God talk to you?" She says, "No, I'm sure he didn't because if he had've done, he'd've stopped." "Well, without telling me what God told you to do, what did you do?" She said, "I did what he told me." But I said, "What did you do?" She said, "It's not nice, I don't say those things. It's not nice." I said, "Miss Lowe, you've got to tell us what you did." She said, "I don't know what it would be on a man, but if it was a sheep, I squeezed his stones."

[Laughter]

KI: What happened in the courtroom?

Ray: Well, this was a preliminary hearing, there weren't many people there. The judge smiled and I said, "Well, what then happened?" "Oh, he groaned and he rolled off of me and let me get up and I got up and then run away."

That was enough. The judge, Earl Freeman, Justice of the Peace, he says, "I find sufficient grounds to hold the defendant on the charge." And he bound him over to stand trial.

When it was through and the court was there, we walked out and this old hag, Miss Lowe, she stood up to the sheriff, and I was standing right there by him. She said, "Thank God, I'm still a maid!"

I wrote that up a number of years ago. I should see if I've still got it. But she's dead, Earl Dillman's dead, Virgil Burns is dead and I'm the only one that's still alive.

It was frustrating, but it was more comical than anything else. I can just see Earl Dillman grinning like a Cheshire cat over there. He didn't think I could get the evidence in. I think they sent Burns to the state penitentiary. I don't know what they did. Virgil Burns died anyway. I know Miss Lowe is dead. She was quite an old gal.

[Pause in taping.]

Ray: I could tell you about the people around here. Essentially, they are extra-good people and this is a marvelous area to live in. The people in this valley are wonderful people, they are true blue, they're honest, they do what's right. I don't think there's anyplace that a person could live where you could find better people.

KI: You say that even though you've seen the seamy side of life here.

Ray: Oh, yes. I've see a lot. There are people that've pulled tricks on me and one thing and another, but essentially, when it's all said and done [the people are good]. People out in Davis Ward used to fight buzz saw. The Slaughts out there, they always had fists to break and find somebody's jaw or something. But if I were destitute and down and out and needed to go say, "Hey, help me!", I think back in those days I could have got more help and better help, right out among those people. They might beat me to a pulp, but they'd pick me up and help me. They were just marvelous people.

I've seen up here, a girl was burned and she died. The question came as what they could do. John Watkins came to my law office. He said, "Ray, I want you to type a little thing and I'm going to put it in these beer halls and see what they'll do." I typed it up and he put it there with a tin cup on it: please donate to such and such family because their girl was burned to death in this flash fire. They collected twice as much out of the people in the beer halls as donated anyplace else. It goes to show you. There's a lot of compassion among quote riff-raff unquote, than you might think.

I knew a fellow down here that wanted the water down in Ouray Valley. They were chronically short down there. He took the stream and it was Cal Jorgensen's water turn. Cal just put it back in his stream and this guy come up to fight Cal, and Cal said, "Now, don't bother about that. It's my turn; yours is this and this." He tried to stop him. He bristled up and came at Cal and tried to hit him. Cal just hit him once and down he went. He got up, dusted off his pants and said, "Can I borrow your marker to mark my field?" Cal said, "Yes, you can." And that was the end of it.

Cal was Leo Jorgensen's dad. As honest and as true blue and as wonderful a man as you'd ever meet. A lot of people here are like that.

KI: You might have been the county attorney at the time, but do you remember when they had a lot of beer halls up on Main Street in Vernal?

Ray: Yeah, I remember Jorgensen's. That was John Jorgensen; he was no relation to Cal. That was up there, just about where that café is, fairly close to the old post office there [approximately 56 West Main]. John Jorgensen had that and it was by the Commercial Hotel.

KI: Do you remember there being a lot of problems with public drunkenness?

Ray: I think it was pushed out of context. I remember Prohibition times back then. When they did away with Prohibition, people could buy a 3.2 beer and that. During the Depression times, there were quite a few people, some of my compatriots, they'd come to town and they'd be out there. People would go out in the sheep and the livestock and one thing and another, they never came to town except once or twice every year. They'd come in and they'd get on a top-notch drunk. Always in Vernal there was a little bit of gambling going on. Although it was against the law, they just didn't pay much attention to it.

KI: Ralph Ashton told me that Eve would send him and Stew someplace, it could have been Jorgensen's, to get Rae because he'd be down there gambling because he really liked to play

cards and gamble. She'd send the boys down to get their dad home. He said that used to just *infuriate* his mother.

Ray: Well, I can understand. There were always a few people that gambled. Herb Snyder, although he was sheriff, Herb was always sitting down to a card game. The saying used to be that Price always had a little prostitution and Vernal always had a little gambling. There was that.

Charlie Hatch had the City Market right next to the bank, in fact, part of the building he was in was part of the Uintah State Bank Building. They've torn it down. [Just east of the northeast corner of Vernal Avenue and Main Street on Main.] I've seen his nephews and that come in drunker than a hoot owl, go lay down, then come back. He had a sack or two of potatoes and some other stuff back there and they'd lay down and sleep it off.

KI: Was there a problem with drunkenness among the Indians, do you think?

Ray: Yeah. For a long time Indians weren't permitted to have spirits. Old Hen Lee, and there's another character that you ought to get something about, he was down around Dragon country for a long time, had a saloon down there in Dragon. He come across with a load of sheep, tried to cross the ice on Green River, and his truck broke through. He just about drowned. Had a load of bucks on. Anyway, they fished him out and he said, "I figured I'd go under that ice there and I'd come up that hole down there!" But they got him out. But old Hen, they got him for selling bootleg whiskey and bootleg beer to the Indians. He was out in federal district court out there in Salt Lake. That's when only the federal courts controlled the Indians.

Incidentally, when I was magistrate, I used to deal with quite a few Indian matters because the local Utah courts and that couldn't handle them anyway. But Hen went there, and Judge Tilman D. Johnson, the first federal judge in Utah, I think after it was a state, I don't know, at least he was there from the early 1900s until just about 1950, right close to there, Tilman D. Johnson.

Anyway, they had old Hen Lee, and he said about the witness, "That guy's not from Lapoint!" The guy testifying for the government said he'd seen Hen Lee sell this stuff. "That guy's not from Lapoint!" Hen said. The judge said, "What do you mean, Mr. Lee?" "Well," Hen says, "everybody in Lapoint, you know when he's out, you can tell, they've all got a ridge right here on the nose." "How do they get that?" "Well," he says, "they make homebrew and put it in quart jars and drink it that way and the jar rubs right there and makes a mark!"

[Laughter]

Ray: It just about broke up federal court.

Hen decided once that he was going to rob the train over in Wyoming. He told me personally about this, the mail train. He got aboard the train all right, but [his] horses were gone. They were going to get it, then get off. They captured him. He did a stint in the federal prison for it. I think it was about two or three years that he was there.

"Oh," he says, "I don't remember much about that. That's when I was to college."

I says, "What do you mean college? You've never gone."

"Well," he says, "I'll have to tell you." He told me about it. He says they sent him up from the federal court over in Wyoming, sent him to, I think it was Leavenworth, Kansas, where

he served his time. Then he came back here.

But anything that happened while he was away there, he didn't know about. That's when he was away at college.

KI: He just didn't want to talk about it at all?

Ray: Oh, he didn't care, he'd tell you about it. He'd tell you about those crooks back there. They didn't know much, they were kind of a bunch of dumb bunnies. He said, "The thing of it is, you try to do something to get ahead, you get caught. You've got to pay for it."

KI: Oh dear! Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?

Ray: Oh, no, not particularly. If you'd like to talk about the people around here, I could tell you about some of the outstanding people, but I think that's about all. Joe Collier was a great man. Lewis Gardiner was outstanding. Jacob Olsen, he's an uncle of mine, he's Charles Olsen's dad. He was a brother of my grandmother. My grandmother died before I was born. She died in 1903, as I recall. Anyway, Uncle Jake, I don't think, had had much formal education in a school room, but he taught school here for the school district for a number of years. He was excellent in mathematics. He was very learned in English and he was just a well-rounded individual.

KI: Pretty much self-taught, then?

Ray: Oh, yes, he was self-taught. He was principal out at Davis there for a while, Davis School, when they had a school out there. He could do algebra, how he learned it, I'll never know, but he did. He was justice of the peace down this way for a while. He was a Sunday school teacher for, I guess, twenty or thirty years, taught what they called the parents' class in Sunday school. I can remember with distinction that he had a way of waving his hands. David L. Richards, who was an immigrant from England, came here, he was Stella Richards father. He delivered the mail for many, many years. He'd argue with Uncle Jake and [those hands would be going]. But he had the capacity.

Old Grandpa Sody was a Swede that came from Sweden to over around Montrose, Colorado, then they finally came over this way. He was an outstanding individual. You ought to get some information about him. Elaine Rich could tell you, she's a granddaughter. Her brother, Duane, just died here a little over a year ago. I talked to his funeral. Duane was, I'll never forget. Once we went over there, we used to trade work back and forth, we never had anything. You never asked people for pay. If they needed help, you'd go there. If you needed a lift, they'd come and help you. That's the way it was. You did things like that, just did it.

We were over there to Soderquists' putting up hay once and Dee Manwaring, and there's another character you ought to get the lowdown on, Dee and Acel, they were Manwaring brothers. Uncle Dee lived up the street here and he was a character. Talk to Verdin about Uncle Dee sometime. But Uncle Dee was over there and he said, "Oh, I hope the rain doesn't come until my hay's done. I sure don't want it to happen!" We were eating dinner and he was a-jawing about it. Grandpa Sody said, he swore a little, he says, "Kist'a'mighty, man, you sound like you've had to eat it yourself!"

[Laughter]

KI: Just like the animals, huh? That's pretty funny. I have one other thing to ask you about. Tell me about your church service.

Ray: Well, I never went on a mission. I grew up active all the time. The only bad thing is, I've had a terrible tongue a lot of the time. I could swear like a trooper, which wasn't nice. But my wife and I were married in the temple. Our kids have, for the most part, remained active. Mark is an attorney. He's the only one that followed my line of work. He graduated from BYU then went down to southern California and got his law degree down there at Southwestern. He's director of the State Prosecution Council now in the state of Utah.

Lee went to a trade tech, graduated for there, worked for Dowell for a long time, went up to Alaska with them. He's now working for a big fertilizer firm right there in Nikiski, it's UNICAL, is the outfit. See, where there's natural gas available, the nitrogen is already in the air. The air consists of about seventy percent nitrogen and thirty percent oxygen. So they use nitrogen, use the natural gas some way, and precipitate the oxygen out and make a substance they call urea, which, if you know chemistry, it's an NH product. You get your ammonia, ammoniate, all these things, it's a nitrogen product. Since nitrogen, even in a compound is quite unstable, they have to be careful. But urea is fairly stable. They make that by the boat load. I've seen their plant and it's right next to the ocean and they have the big conveyor belt that goes over and one of those container ships go up and they load that in one of those, seal it up and away the boat goes. They sell it somewhere else. That's where Lee works.

Ray graduated from the University of Utah. He became a CPA, worked as an auditor for Haskins and Sells for a number of years. Then he and two other people organized the Vectra Bank over in Denver, Colorado. Vectra was ultimately purchased by Zions. They had about fifty banks over there in Colorado. Ray has a lot of stock in Zions Bancorp at the time. Since they transferred their bookkeeping, he's no longer with them over there, but he's done eminently well financially with the stock that he's got and stuff like that. Oh, he could buy me out about a hundred times over, I guess. I haven't asked him how much he's worth, but he's certainly not in the poor house.

Dale, the fourth child, he married Elizabeth Matthews, one of the sweetest girls I ever saw. They were here for a while, then he went to work for Thiokol. They transferred him down to Florida. Then since that, Thiokol is no longer down there. He has transferred and has seniority and that with the United Space Alliance, which is the contractor for the space station. He's a vice-president down there. He's done eminently well. He has three boys and they're all grown.

Then Clyde, he's our youngest one, Clyde is working out in Elko, Nevada, at the Barrack Gold Mine there. He works in where they process the ore. It's kind of a maintenance supervisor or something, he does that. He has two children. Their daughter, she's the oldest, she's been at the University of Nevada. She did three years and she made the Dean's List every semester. I suppose she graduates next spring with an accounting degree.

Ray has two daughters, both married, and a son who is getting his degree in accounting at BYU.

Mark had six children. His one girl is in college at Utah State. The others are working. Mike lives right over here. He's the only one in town, the others are gone.

Dale's kids are all back east; Lee's are up in Alaska. He had six children. Their last

daughter was born seventeen years after the other, their youngest, was born. His four boys have been on missions, one's on a mission now, over in Ely, Nevada, that's where he's at. But they work up there. They've been up there for about fourteen or fifteen years. They have a nice home up there and things like that. Their oldest girl married a fellow; she's having her second baby in just a few days now. Their oldest boys went to Texas on a mission. He got married and he's got two years of college behind him and he's still going back. He works the night shift at Fred Meyer. I guess he's doing that to see him through school. That's where they are and they keep track. I write them a letter once a week and send it to all them, email.

KI: Do you remember being in any organizations here in Vernal, service organizations or anything?

Ray: I was a charter member of the Rotary Club and was with them from the time it was organized for twenty-odd years there. But then because of my dealings as a magistrate and that, I retired about 1995, I think, and I didn't belong to it anymore. But I was one of the original Rotarians here.

KI: Were you members of the Knife and Fork Club?

Ray: No. Whit Hammond was in the Lions Club. Whit was district governor at one time, but that's the only one. I was a little bit different than most of the other attorneys up there. I got up so that I could afford to own this farm, to raise my kids here, and I've often boasted that the only thing that I raised that had any value on this farm were boys and *they* weren't profitable! But I raised five sons here, they all learned to work.

Living on a farm is a way of life. You've got to count your rewards in something other than dollars and cents. Corn growing, step out and see a bunch of calves that are born, and one thing and another, they were commodities. You put a lot of work into them, sell them once a year and maybe get enough to pay the taxes and water assessment and a few things to get you started all over again for next year. But it's a way of life. It's enjoyable to me. I know a lot of people wouldn't like it, but I do.

KI: Does Mike still help you with the farm?

Ray: Oh, yeah, he does. He hasn't got it in his blood, though, like he should have. A farmer is the kind of a guy that if he thinks about is the gate locked? "I don't know, I'd better go see." He'll walk down and see; he'll check the water, you know, put a dam in. You might not make it run uphill, but he can make the water run where he wants it. You consider all your stuff, ownership of it, things like that, it becomes like pets. But still, you don't become so attached to it that you wouldn't sell it. You might weep a little bit when you sell something, but you do it. It's like any other commodity. I thoroughly enjoy it.

KI: And you've been at it for a good long time.

Ray: Yes.

KI: How old are you?

Ray: I'm just past eighty-eight. I had my eighty-eighth birthday just last week. I see these guys uptown and they like my stories and can't contradict me because I'm the only one around!

KI: Because you're the only one who remembers! Well, I think we're finished here. Thank you so much for talking with me today.